

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 13-02-2006		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Look Out Below: Islamic Terrorism in South America				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)  LCDR Christopher A. Cruz, USN  Paper Advisor (if Any): CDR Dario Teicher, USN				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT  With hundreds of millions of dollars of financial support, ease of movement into the United States because of false passports and visas provided by corrupt South American government officials, and a sympathetic population filled with anti-American sentiment, the Islamic terrorist threat is very real in South America and should be a major security concern for the United States. While U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) receives most of the attention from U.S. political and military leaders due to the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the ongoing conflict in Iraq, and recent developments in Iran, the many threats in South America, to include Islamic terrorists, narco-terrorists, corrupt government officials, and the growing relationships among the three, is reason enough to elevate U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) from its current level of importance to one demanding the highest attention. In order to combat the growth of Islamic terrorism in South America, the United States must disrupt the conditions such as corruption, lawlessness, prevalence of drugs, and anti-Americanism that allow this terrorism to thrive.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Terrorism, Counterterrorism, South America, Theater Security Cooperation					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  21	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, RI**

**LOOK OUT BELOW: ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN SOUTH AMERICA**

**By**

**Christopher A. Cruz  
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy**

**A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**February 13, 2006**

**CDR Dario Teicher, USN  
Faculty Advisor, JMO Department**

## **Abstract**

With hundreds of millions of dollars of financial support, ease of movement into the United States because of false passports and visas provided by corrupt South American government officials, and a sympathetic population filled with anti-American sentiment, the Islamic terrorist threat is very real in South America and should be a major security concern for the United States. While U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) receives most of the attention from U.S. political and military leaders due to the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the ongoing conflict in Iraq, and recent developments in Iran, the many threats in South America, to include Islamic terrorists, narco-terrorists, corrupt government officials, and the growing relationships among the three, is reason enough to elevate U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) from its current level of importance to one demanding the highest attention. In order to combat the growth of Islamic terrorism in South America, the United States must disrupt the conditions such as corruption, lawlessness, prevalence of drugs, and anti-Americanism that allow this terrorism to thrive.

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	1
Islamic Terrorism in the Tri-Border Area and Venezuela	1
Facilitators for Islamic Terrorism	4
Counterargument	9
Recommendations	11
Conclusion	15
Notes	16
Bibliography	18

## **INTRODUCTION**

With the Iraq conflict being waged half a world away, the average American feels relatively safe from the distant threats of Osama bin Laden, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and Iraqi insurgents. But what if Islamic terrorists were only a thousand miles from the southern border of the United States and possessed the ability to conduct deadly terror attacks such as bringing suicide bombers into crowded U.S. shopping malls? With hundreds of millions of dollars of financial support, ease of movement into the U.S. because of false passports and visas, and a sympathetic population filled with anti-American sentiment, the Islamic terrorist threat is very real in South America and should be a major security concern for the U.S.

While Central Command (CENTCOM) receives most of the attention from U.S. political and military leaders due to the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the ongoing conflict in Iraq, and recent developments in Iran, the many threats in South America, to include Islamic terrorists, narco-terrorists, corrupt government officials, and the growing relationships among the three, is reason enough to elevate U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) from its current level of importance to one demanding the highest attention. In order to combat the growth of Islamic terrorism in South America, the U.S. must disrupt the conditions such as corruption, lawlessness, prevalence of drugs, and anti-Americanism that allow this terrorism to thrive.

## **ISLAMIC TERRORISM IN THE TRI-BORDER AREA AND VENEZUELA**

The tropical strip of land where Argentina meets with Paraguay and Brazil is known as the Tri-Border Area (TBA) or Tri-Border Frontier. Ciudad del Este, Paraguay and Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil are the two most prominent cities in the TBA with regards to criminal activity. Most of the Arab population in the TBA resides in these two cities and is estimated to be

between 20,000 and 30,000. This haven of lawlessness is a hotbed for Islamic terrorism, drugs, organized crime, corruption, money laundering, arms smuggling, piracy, and other illegal activities. With many avenues for financing, access to weapons, complicity of local officials, freedom of movement, many sympathizers in the local population, and terrain in which camouflage and concealment is advantageous for those that wish to remain undetected, the TBA is an ideal location for terrorists who wish to do harm to the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple links exist between Al Qaeda and the TBA. Various intelligence reports state that Osama bin Laden and Khalid Shaikh Mohammed spent time in the TBA in 1995.<sup>2</sup> In 1999, the Secretariat for State Intelligence (SIDE), Argentina's equivalent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), conducted an in-depth investigation complete with video surveillance that identified Al Qaeda agents operating in the TBA.<sup>3</sup> There is even speculation that Al Qaeda operatives in the TBA knew about the 9/11 attacks prior to the actual events.<sup>4</sup> According to Brazilian press reports, a Moroccan student who overheard conversations in Foz do Iguaçu about the 9/11 plans attempted to warn U.S. authorities about the impending attack that would include "two explosions."<sup>5</sup> This attempted warning was delivered on September 5, 2001. The Al Qaeda links travel as far as Kabul, Afghanistan, where a map of the TBA was found in an Al Qaeda safe house.<sup>6</sup> In 2002, Mossad, Israel's intelligence service, warned Argentina of the presence of Al Qaeda cells in the TBA.<sup>7</sup>

There are also many connections between the Lebanese Hezbollah, Palestinian Hamas, Egyptian Islamiyya al Gammat (Islamic Group), and Egyptian Islamic Jihad to the TBA.<sup>8</sup> Paraguayan police found a letter from a Hezbollah leader congratulating Assad Barakat for his fundraising efforts in the TBA. Barakat, Hezbollah's chief of military operations and chief fundraiser in the TBA, helped financially support Hezbollah operations,

including suicide bomber missions, and allegedly has ties with Osama bin Laden.<sup>9</sup> Brazilian officials claim that financing from the TBA to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad totaled \$261 million in 2000 alone.<sup>10</sup> In June 2004, the U.S. Treasury identified several front companies in the TBA that were used to launder and funnel money for Hezbollah operations in Iran and Lebanon.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, many arrests have been made in the TBA countries for terrorism related crimes including the 1994 attack in Luxor, Egypt and two attacks in Buenos Aires--the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center. Numerous arrests were also made for document forging, possession of false documents, distribution of contraband, fundraising for terrorists, and tax evasion. In May 2004, the Argentine judiciary investigated the alleged import of three surface-to-air missiles into the TBA.<sup>12</sup> Just as alarming is the material found in a Hezbollah command post in the TBA--training courses for suicide bombers and over 60 hours of videotape and CD-ROMs displaying explosive attacks in locations all over the world.<sup>13</sup>

Venezuela is also a major security concern for SOUTHCOM. President Hugo Chavez's past visits with figures such as Saddam Hussein, Robert Mugabe, Muammar Qaddafi, and former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami are disturbing, as is his complicity with Islamic terrorists. Chavez has allowed Margarita Island to be used as a base for illicit financial dealings and counterfeiting.<sup>14</sup> Margarita Island, which is run predominantly by Lebanese and Iranian merchants, contains alleged support cells for Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamiyya al Gammat.<sup>15</sup> Although the Venezuelan government denies supporting Islamic terrorism, investigators exposed a scheme where thousands of Venezuelan identity documents were distributed to foreigners from Pakistan, Egypt, Syria, and

Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> At least one Venezuelan of Arab descent, Hakim Mamad Al Diab Fatah, has alleged ties to Al Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks.<sup>17</sup>

With Venezuela being a mere thousand miles from U.S. shores and the TBA immersed in a myriad of terrorist support activities, SOUTHCOM should dedicate more attention to these problem areas. It should be noted that although this paper focuses on the TBA and Venezuela, Islamic terrorism is growing in other parts of South America. A strong signal that points to this expansion is the emergence of an unofficial “second Tri-Border Area” in the region between Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the growing “Arab Mafia” which is involved with arms and drug trafficking, money laundering, and the exploitation of undocumented workers is expanding in Chui, Brazil; Guayaquil, Ecuador; Iquique, Chile; and Maracaibo, Venezuela.<sup>19</sup> The scarcity of police, prevalence of corrupt officials, drug activity, and large Muslim communities attract Islamic terrorists to these areas. SOUTHCOM’s counterterrorism efforts should expand to defeat these growing threats.

### **FACILITATORS FOR ISLAMIC TERRORISM**

According to the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, terrorists seek to exploit people living with poverty, deprivation, social disenfranchisement, and unresolved political and regional disputes. Most of these conditions are present in different degrees in various parts of South America. Other facilitators exist in the TBA, however, such as corruption, drugs, lawlessness, and anti-American sentiment that must be attacked in order to diminish the threat of Islamic terrorism in South America.

The detrimental effects of corruption in South America are widespread. Presidents, state governors, congressmen, mayors, judges, police officers, municipal officials, customs officers, and border police have all been involved in some form of corrupt activity.<sup>20</sup>



Corruption and complicity exacerbates an already high level of lawlessness in the TBA.

Corruption is now taking another role in South America--as a facilitator that allows Islamic terrorism to prosper.

Corruption related to customs and border control is especially disruptive due to the freedom of movement it provides to Islamic terrorists. One investigation revealed a money-for-passports criminal enterprise that resulted in an annual average of 570 foreigners illegally entering Paraguay through the Ciudad del Este Airport.<sup>21</sup> In one instance, a Paraguayan woman was found with 13 false passports, an official Paraguayan “This visa was issued by judicial order” seal, and several visa applications. This case was connected to an interim Paraguayan consul who issued more than 500 illegal visas for \$900 each.<sup>22</sup> It was later determined that consulates in Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil were falsifying documents as well. The U.S. is not immune to this type of activity. Since June 1999, the Paraguayan consul in Miami allegedly sold over 300 passports, visas, and shipping documents to customers traveling to the TBA. Customers included three Lebanese individuals on the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) terrorist watch list and other terrorist suspects from Egypt and Syria.<sup>23</sup> It is abundantly clear that an easy route for Islamic terrorists to enter the U.S. is through South America.

Unfortunately, even those in the highest leadership positions have succumbed to the temptation of corrupt money. In connection with the 1992 Israeli Embassy bombing, a former Iranian intelligence officer testified that the Iranian government planned and conducted the bombing, then paid former Argentine President Carlos Menem ten million dollars to disrupt the investigation.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the judge presiding over the case of the Jewish community center bombing allegedly ignored promising leads and withheld important

evidence. Not surprisingly, there is video evidence of this judge discussing a cash payment with a defendant in the case.<sup>25</sup>

Corruption helps to sustain the already drastic poverty level in South America. With 44 percent of Latin Americans earning less than two dollars a day, corruption hurts South America's chances for economic improvement.<sup>26</sup> Even if large amounts of economic aid are lavished on South American countries in need, this aid may never reach those who truly need it due to rampant corruption, lack of security, and a South American bureaucracy that holds the unenviable distinction of having the most unequal distribution of wealth in the industrialized world.<sup>27</sup> High levels of corruption and poverty help to create favorable conditions for Islamic terrorism to thrive.

While the separate threats of Islamic terrorists, drug traffickers, paramilitary groups, organized crime, and corrupt officials are harmful entities by themselves, the growing trend of these groups in combining their efforts is disturbing. For example, the Shining Path, a resurgent terrorist group in Peru, is using its relationship with drug cartels and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) paramilitary group to reestablish its power base.<sup>28</sup> Borrowing the financing, extortion, and kidnapping tactics from its nefarious partners, the latest version of the Shining Path is an example of how the different groups use one another to advance their separate goals.

Islamic terrorists acquire hundreds of millions of dollars through their crooked relationships with drug traffickers. With over 100 hidden airstrips in the surrounding area, a multitude of complicit border officials, and general lawlessness, the TBA is very accommodating to drug trafficking. In November 2000, Brazil's Congress released a report that concluded that drug related corruption was so prevalent that it would be impossible to fix

without restructuring and rearming Brazil's entire police force.<sup>29</sup> By developing relationships with narco-terrorists, Islamic terrorists are helping drugs such as cocaine and heroin to enter the U.S. This is very significant, considering that drugs account for over 21,000 U.S. deaths a year and result in over \$160 billion of lost revenue.<sup>30</sup> Because the connections between terrorism and drugs run deep, it would be impossible to effectively fight one without fighting the other.

When the power of corrupt government officials is thrown into the mix, the already devious relationships between Islamic terrorists and drug traffickers become even more volatile. Illegally acquired money is used by Islamic terrorists to pay corrupt officials for fake passports, visas, and influence over police. The primary purpose of this money, however, is recruiting, weapons procurement, and financing for terrorist attacks against the U.S. and its allies. As the relationships between Islamic terrorists, drug traffickers, and corrupt officials continue to grow, stability in South America continues to diminish. These growing relationships are a major concern for SOUTHCOM and should be combated by developing strong relationships of its own with partner nations.

Another important facilitator that helps Islamic terrorism to exist in South America is the anti-American sentiment present in many of its citizens. In Latin America, it has become very commonplace to criticize the U.S. To illustrate, the percentage of the population that has a negative view of the U.S. is 58 percent in Mexico, 62 percent in Argentina, 42 percent in Brazil, and 37 percent in Chile.<sup>31</sup> These numbers were significantly lower just a few years ago. Some of the reasons for this anti-Americanism include a dislike for capitalism, globalization, trade restrictions, perceived U.S. apathy towards Latin America, coca eradication, and U.S. unilateralism. Although the U.S. does enjoy friendly relationships with

several South American nations, there's no doubting the existence of the anti-American sentiment, particularly in areas of heavy Middle Eastern influence.

Several Latin American leaders owe part of their successful bids for office to their less than friendly posture towards the U.S. The recent elections of Evo Morales of Bolivia and Michelle Bachelet of Chile add to an already long list of leftist leaders which boasts Nestor Kirchner of Argentina, Luiz Lula da Silva of Brazil, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Lucio Gutierrez of Ecuador, and Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay as members. While this shift to the left is not an overt threat to the U.S., it speaks volumes about the anti-American sentiment that is prevalent in South America. This sentiment makes SOUTHCOM's theater security cooperation plan (TSCP) more difficult to implement while supporting conditions for Islamic terrorism to prosper. SOUTHCOM and U.S. political leaders must diminish this harmful anti-American attitude by focusing their attention on building strong, inclusive relationships with their southern neighbors.

Chavez's contentious dialogue denouncing U.S. policy has taken anti-Americanism to a new level. With a president that blatantly antagonizes President Bush and other senior U.S. officials and has alleged ties to Islamic terrorism, Venezuela has transformed from a close U.S. ally into a security threat. Fortunately, Chavez has displayed some pragmatism when dealing with the U.S. but should Venezuela gain more economic independence from the U.S. by establishing closer ties with China, the U.S. should not be surprised by an even more belligerent attitude towards the U.S. and even more acceptance of Islamic terrorists from the unpredictable Chavez. The U.S. should work to ensure that other Latin leaders do not replicate Chavez's anti-American attitude. Although anti-Americanism in Venezuela and the TBA is not the primary reason why terrorists choose to frequent these areas, it is undeniably

much more appealing to be in a locale where you are welcomed and your enemies are despised. It is imperative that SOUTHCOM's TSCP be focused on curtailing this anti-Americanism by fostering goodwill and strengthening relationships with partner nations.

Because of the strong presence of facilitators such as corruption, poverty, drugs, narco-terrorism, lawlessness, and anti-Americanism, an environment has been created in the TBA and parts of Venezuela that is extremely favorable for the growth of Islamic terrorism. When one connects the dots between suicide bomber training, fake passports obtained from corrupt officials, weak border controls, large amounts of financing and illegal arms from drug traffickers, and religious extremists who are willing to die in order to kill Americans, it is not hard to imagine a deadly terrorist attack coming from America's southern flank.

### **COUNTERARGUMENT**

Is the threat of growing Islamic terrorism in South America overblown hype or reality? Some would argue that the answer is hype. The CIA has downplayed the quality of intelligence in the TBA, especially intelligence from local and foreign intelligence agencies.<sup>32</sup> Some view the links between Al Qaeda, the TBA, and Venezuela as suspect and deny the presence of operational terrorist cells in South America. Additionally, some may argue that because South America is comprised of democratic nations that do not pose a direct threat to the U.S., the current level of attention given to South America is adequate. Because of the worldwide attention on Iraq and other threats in the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR), the security priorities of the U.S. seem to be in the proper order.

In rebuttal, even if the links between the TBA and Al Qaeda are unclear, what is indisputable is that the TBA has been a robust fundraising source for Islamic terrorists and that there has been a significant terrorist presence in South America--as evidenced by the two

Buenos Aires bombings, a 1992 suicide bomber attack, and several planned attacks that were thwarted.<sup>33</sup> If terrorist activity in the TBA and Venezuela is limited to strictly fundraising, this is reason enough to cause major concern. These funds allow Islamic terrorists to recruit, spread their ideology, obtain weapons, train, and most importantly, conduct deadly terror attacks. With the close proximity between the U.S. and South America, the U.S. does not have the luxury of being wrong with regard to the severity of the terrorist threat.

Additionally, because terror fundraising is deeply linked to the drug trade, it allows an inordinate amount of drugs to enter the U.S. which leads to thousands of drug related deaths. While much has been made over the search for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, the U.S. would do well not to neglect one weapon that is prevalent in South America and kills approximately 21,000 Americans a year--drugs.<sup>34</sup>

Since the 1980s, the spread of democracy has been very successful in Latin America. Unfortunately, a shift to leftist leaders, economic crises, and major security issues such as Islamic terrorism, drug trafficking, and corruption threaten some of the weaker democracies. While the failure of a U.S. supported democracy in Iraq would be a devastating blow to U.S. credibility, a failed democracy in the Western Hemisphere--such as the transformation of Venezuela into a full blown dictatorship or the collapse of any South American nation--would arguably be just as devastating because it would have occurred in America's own backyard. The U.S. cannot allow either of these events to happen. The backlash from the American public following the government's perceived unresponsiveness to the Hurricane Katrina disaster is a reminder to the U.S. that although it is important for troops to defend crucial U.S. interests in faraway lands, it may be a higher priority to the American people to tend to important issues closer to home.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Eliminating the threat of Islamic terrorism in South America is a challenge that must be met head on by SOUTHCOM. To achieve this goal, SOUTHCOM should attack the conditions that allow terrorism to prosper in the TBA and Venezuela. The life of the terrorist in South America must be made to be extremely uncomfortable. Terrorists must realize that they do not have free reign to conduct their activities in South America. It should be pointed out that although all of these recommendations apply to the TBA, only some will apply to Venezuela because of Chavez's refusal to allow U.S. intervention in many areas.

One of the most important steps in diminishing terrorist activity is to attack terror financing, fundraising, and money laundering networks. Many positive steps have already been made in this area but a more concentrated effort is needed because of the magnitude of the problem. With an estimated six to twelve billion dollars being laundered in the TBA annually, the SOUTHCOM Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) should coordinate with organizations such as the Interagency Financial Systems Assessment Teams, the U.S. Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and the South American Financial Action Task Force (GAFISUD) to combat the terror financing and money laundering problems.<sup>35</sup> These organizations possess the expertise to train and assist banking officials in the TBA and Venezuela to discover suspicious financial activity.<sup>36</sup> These organizations should focus on attacking the Black Market Peso Exchange (BMPE) and defeating the money laundering technique of disguising illegal transactions to terrorist organizations through the common practice of remitting funds to relatives in the Middle East.

Because Islamic terrorists rely on the drug trade for a large portion of their financing, the war on drugs is inextricably linked with the GWOT. With 90 percent of the cocaine and

47 percent of the heroin that enters the U.S. coming from Colombia, the U.S. must continue to attack the drug problem through its ongoing security cooperation measures with Colombia.<sup>37</sup> With Chavez allegedly supporting Islamic terrorism and the FARC, U.S. support for Colombia also provides much needed leverage against Venezuela. Because narco-terrorists still exert some level of control in over 40 percent of Colombia, the U.S. must continue to aggressively support Plan Colombia.<sup>38</sup> As the largest single piece of the current SOUTHCOM TSCP, Plan Colombia is vital to winning the war on drugs and consequently, equally important to winning the GWOT.

Another important step in disrupting the conditions that allow Islamic terrorism to prosper is to create a stronger security presence in critical areas such as the TBA and Margarita Island. Effective and incorruptible security forces are paramount if these locations are to deter the presence of terrorists and improve the current level of lawlessness. SOUTHCOM should maximize training opportunities with TBA partner nation military forces to include military exercises, military-to-military contacts, and U.S. Special Forces participation in Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and the Joint Combined Exchange Training program (JCET). SOUTHCOM should also coordinate with U.S. Border Patrol, Customs and Immigration officials, and the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to provide valuable training in general law enforcement, anti-corruption, border control and illegal documents to TBA law enforcement personnel.<sup>39</sup> Training that is conducted in the TBA would be especially effective because of the increased security presence in this critical area.

Brazil and Paraguay are unable to receive International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds because they fail to give U.S. personnel immunity from the



International Criminal Court (ICC). SOUTHCOM has other funding options at its disposal, however, such as the Regional Defense Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP). Because CTFP is funded through the defense budget rather than the foreign assistance budget, the CTFP is free of most human rights and democracy conditions that apply to foreign aid programs. Under CTFP funding, SOUTHCOM should maximize the use of Mobile Education Teams to conduct counterterrorism training in the TBA. Unfortunately, CTFP funding for Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil was reduced in 2006. Considering the growing threat of Islamic terrorism in the TBA, this is a mistake that needs to be rectified.

Consideration should be given to training South American security forces at Fort Bragg, Fort Benning, or other U.S. military bases to expedite the number of available security forces and to obtain the highest quality training possible. Training in this manner would help to build personal relationships, gain an appreciation for life in the U.S. which in turn may help to diminish the anti-American sentiment shared by many South Americans, and create “pride in ownership” with those involved. By emphasizing the importance of the training by locating it at the premiere military installations in the world, the individuals trained will be more committed to train others with the same high standards and less likely to succumb to the corruption they might be exposed to upon return to their home countries.

It would be naïve to believe that all of the requested TSC training programs will be funded. However, SOUTHCOM should properly prioritize the funding it does receive. These TSC measures should help to create the security forces needed to bring a requisite level of security to the region, build better relations with partner nations, and help to soften the anti-Americanism which in turn makes it more difficult for Islamic terrorists to thrive.

To further diminish the anti-American sentiment, the U.S. should be more inclusive with South America than it has been in recent years. Inclusive actions should include the TSC measures previously discussed, more visits to South America from the President and other high level officials, a trade policy that is more complementary to South America (similar to the preferential access to the U.S. market that Mexico enjoys), and increased dialogue such as an expanded version of the 3 + 1 Counterterrorism Dialogue.<sup>40</sup>

The 3 + 1 was formed to address the growing terror links in the TBA. The original members of the 3 + 1 are Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, and the U.S. Because of growing terror threats in their cities, the 3 + 1 should be expanded to include Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Peru. With the support of the SOUTHCOM JIATF and the Organization of American States Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (OAS CICTE), the expanded 3 + 1 should share ideas and create initiatives that improve anti-terror legislation, security presence, regional cooperation, sharing of intelligence, border security, financial crimes detection, deterrence of corruption, and elimination of safe havens for terrorists.<sup>41</sup>

In military circles, there has been talk of merging SOUTHCOM with another Combatant Command or reducing it to a Sub-Unified Command because of a perceived low security priority when compared to other global hotspots. To diminish SOUTHCOM's status would be a grave security error. On the contrary, SOUTHCOM's status should be elevated due to the growing threat of Islamic terrorism in its AOR and the relatively close distance of that threat to the U.S. In a continent rife with economic hardship, long-standing violence between warring paramilitary groups, drugs as the sole means of existence for a significant portion of the population, widespread corruption, and a population with a growing dislike for U.S. policy, the cumulative effect of these factors is the creation of an environment that is

extremely conducive to Islamic terrorism. It is imperative that SOUTHCOM receive the attention and assets it needs to eliminate this very serious threat.

## **CONCLUSION**

Effective security cooperation measures and an inclusive environment between the U.S. and partner nations are essential to disrupting the conditions that allow Islamic terrorism to thrive in South America. Like unwanted weeds, threats have an uncanny ability to grow and reach well beyond their original roots. As these threats continue to grow and transform, getting closer and closer to U.S. shores with each successful drug deal, weapons purchase, and fake passport, the U.S. must also change in order to defeat this enemy.

During World War I, Germany sent the infamous Zimmermann telegram which promised Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to Mexico if Mexico joined Germany in an alliance against the U.S. At the time, tensions between the U.S. and Mexico were very high due to the attack of New Mexico by Mexican revolutionary, Pancho Villa and his 1,500 Mexican raiders. Despite these tensions, Mexico realized that hemispheric security and friendship with the U.S. was much more important and declined Germany's offer. Less than twenty years later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt also acknowledged the importance of friendship with Latin America when he implemented the Good Neighbor Policy--legislation that focused on enhancing hemispheric solidarity. Today, the U.S. has an opportunity to eliminate a growing threat in South America and in the process, help out old friends. Even with the world's most complicated problems, solutions can sometimes be summed up with one word--friendship.

## NOTES

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Randall Wood, "South America's Tri-Borders Region," SAIS Review, 25 (Winter 2005): 105.
- <sup>2</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South America, Issue Sixteen – 2005 (United Kingdom: Sentinel House, 2004), 150.
- <sup>3</sup> Rex A. Hudson, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America (Washington, DC: 2003), 16.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>5</sup> Laverle Berry, Glenn E. Curtis, Rex A. Hudson and Nina A. Kollars, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, A Global Overview of Narcotics-Funded Terrorist and Other Extremist Groups (Washington, DC: May 2002), 25.
- <sup>6</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South America, Issue Sixteen – 2005, 150.
- <sup>7</sup> Hudson, 23.
- <sup>8</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South America, Issue Sixteen – 2005, 150.
- <sup>9</sup> Hudson, 22-28.
- <sup>10</sup> Berry, 27.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul D. Taylor, Latin American Security Challenges: A Collaborative Inquiry from North and South Newport Papers, no. 22, (Newport: US Naval War College, 2004), 23.
- <sup>12</sup> Wood, 105.
- <sup>13</sup> Berry, 32-33.
- <sup>14</sup> Paul Crespo, "The Other Axis of Evil," American Legion Magazine, 1 July 2003, <[http://www.defenddemocracy.org/in\\_the\\_media/in\\_the\\_media\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=265102](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/in_the_media/in_the_media_show.htm?doc_id=265102)> [16 January 2006].
- <sup>15</sup> Linda Robinson, "Terror Close to Home," U.S. News and World Report, 6 October 2003, <<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/031006/6venezuela.htm>> [19 January 2006].
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> Hudson, 35.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Taylor, 23.
- <sup>21</sup> Hudson, 49.
- <sup>22</sup> Hudson, 50.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

- 
- <sup>24</sup> Hudson, 47.
- <sup>25</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, "Blind Eye: Are South American Countries Downplaying the Threat of Islamic Terrorism?" The American Prospect, 20 December 2002, <<http://www.prospect.org/webfeatures/2002/12/goldberg-j-12-20.html>> [5 January 2006].
- <sup>26</sup> "Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee," House Armed Services Committee, FY 2006 Defense, 9 March 2005, <<http://ciponline.org/colombia/050309crad.pdf>> [16 January 2006].
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Taylor, 41.
- <sup>29</sup> Hudson, 48.
- <sup>30</sup> "Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee."
- <sup>31</sup> Taylor, 42.
- <sup>32</sup> Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South America, Issue Sixteen – 2005, 150.
- <sup>33</sup> Berry, 12-13.
- <sup>34</sup> "Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee."
- <sup>35</sup> Hudson, 51.
- <sup>36</sup> William Pope, "More Capacity Needed for War on Terror in Western Hemisphere," 3 March 2004, <<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=March&x=20040312160347FRllehtiM0.7013208&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>> [19 January 2006].
- <sup>37</sup> "Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee."
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> Jeffrey F. Addicott and Guy B. Roberts, "Building Democracies with Southern Command's Legal Engagement Strategy," Parameters, 31 (Spring 2001): 72.
- <sup>40</sup> Geoffrey Wawro, "Letter from South America," Naval War College Review, 55 (Summer 2002): 115.
- <sup>41</sup> "Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee."

---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Addicott, Jeffrey F. and Guy B. Roberts. "Building Democracies with Southern Command's Legal Engagement Strategy." Parameters, 31 (Spring 2001): 72.
- Berry, LaVerle, Glenn E. Curtis, Rex A. Hudson and Nina A. Kollars. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. A Global Overview of Narcotics-Funded Terrorist and Other Extremist Groups. Washington, DC: May 2002.
- Bush, George W. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Washington, DC: February 2003.
- Crespo, Paul. "The Other Axis of Evil." American Legion Magazine. 1 July 2003.  
<[http://www.defenddemocracy.org/in\\_the\\_media/in\\_the\\_media\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=265102](http://www.defenddemocracy.org/in_the_media/in_the_media_show.htm?doc_id=265102)> [16 January 2006].
- Delgado, Pedro V., Luis Bitencourt, and Henry M. Uribe. Perspectives from Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, July 2003.
- Goldberg, Jonathan. "Blind Eye: Are South American Countries Downplaying the Threat of Islamic Terrorism?" The American Prospect. 20 December 2002.  
<<http://www.prospect.org/webfeatures/2002/12/goldberg-j-12-20.html>> [5 January 2006].
- Hartung, Robert A. "A Critique of Plan Colombia." Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 2005.
- Haugaard, Lisa, Adam Isacson, and Joy Olson. Erasing the Lines: Trends in U.S. Military Programs with Latin America. Just the Facts Program, December. Washington, DC: Joint Publication from Center for International Policy, Latin America Working Group Foundation, and Washington Office on Latin America, 2005.
- Hudson, Rex A. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America. Washington, DC: 2003.

---

Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South America, Issue Sixteen – 2005. United Kingdom: Sentinel House, 2004.

Manwaring, Max G., Wendy Fontela, Mary Grizzard, and Dennis Rempe. Building Regional Security Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, October 2003.

Nunez, Joseph R. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Security Architecture for the Americas: Multilateral Cooperation, Liberal Peace, and Soft Power. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, August 2002.

Pope, William. "More Capacity Needed for War on Terror in Western Hemisphere," 3 March 2004. <<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=March&x=20040312160347FRllehtiM0.7013208&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>> [19 January 2006].

"Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Army, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, House Armed Services Committee." House Armed Services Committee, FY 2006 Defense. 9 March 2005. <<http://ciponline.org/colombia/050309crad.pdf>> [16 January 2006].

Robinson, Linda. "Terror Close to Home." U.S. News and World Report. 6 October 2003. <<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/031006/6venezuela.htm>> [19 January 2006].

Taylor, Paul D. Latin American Security Challenges: A Collaborative Inquiry from North and South. Newport Papers, no. 22. Newport: US Naval War College, 2004.

United States Southern Command. United States Southern Command FY 03-05 Theater Security Cooperation Strategic Guidance. Miami, FL: November 2002.

Wawro, Geoffrey. "Letter from South America." Naval War College Review, 55 (Summer 2002): 115.

Wood, Randall. "South America's Tri-Borders Region." SAIS Review, 25 (Winter 2005): 105.